

NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

January 19, 2005

A meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) was held on Wednesday, January 19, 2005, in the City of Grass Valley Council Chambers, 125 East Main Street, Grass Valley, California. The meeting was scheduled for 8:30 a.m.

Members Present: Tim Brady, Patti Ingram, Russ Steele, Conley Weaver

Members Absent: Nate Beason, Josh Susman, Robin Sutherland

Staff Present: Dan Landon, Executive Director; Nancy Holman, Administrative Services Officer; Toni Perry, Administrative Assistant

Standing Orders: Vice-Chairman Steele convened the Nevada County Transportation Commission meeting at 8:32 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

1. Financial Reports:

A. December 2004

There were no comments.

2. Correspondence:

Vice-Chairman Steele mentioned he appreciated receiving correspondence by email, prior to the distribution of meeting packets.

3. Executive Director's Report

3.1 Transit/Paratransit Governance Study

Executive Director Landon stated NCTC staff received the final draft of the Executive Summary of the Transit/Paratransit Governance Study, conducted by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates of San Francisco. The final draft of the report was expected later that day. The report will be shared with members of the community for comment. The Transit Services Commission (TSC) will discuss the recommendations in the report at their February 16th meeting.

3.2 Air Quality Conformity Overview

Michael Woodman, Transportation Planner, prepared a summary of the air quality process that will be followed in the next few months. In concert with this, NCTC will be updating the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and a timeline with dates and activities was provided. Vice-Chairman Steele asked for a definition of the term "regionally significant," which appeared in the summary. Executive Director Landon explained it refers to projects that typically are on the high volume streets in the regional system, or development projects that generate a large amount of traffic. Mr. Landon mentioned that the term will be defined for Nevada County in meetings with NCTC, Federal

Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Caltrans, California Air Resources Board, and the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District. The agreed upon definition will be used to identify a list of “regionally significant” projects for Nevada County.

3.5 California Transportation Commission’s 2004 Annual Report to the Legislature

Executive Director Landon remarked this was the strongest and most direct report he has seen in twenty years. He mentioned that although the California Transportation Commission (CTC) is made up of persons appointed by the Administration, the CTC took the Administration to task on the issue of transportation funding. The report stressed the dire straits the State is in and declared that if the State continues to divert transportation revenues to the California General Fund, currently scheduled transportation improvement projects will not be built and this will seriously impact the State’s economy. Vice-Chairman Steele suggested everyone read the report and stated he, too, was impressed with how straightforward the message was. He felt it was not a typical government report that tends to use many words to obscure the facts.

4A. Caltrans District 3 - Project Status Report: Tom Brannon, Caltrans Project Manager for Nevada County.

Tom Brannon gave a brief summary of project activity that has occurred since the last NCTC meeting. Those include:

- *Grass Valley Ramp/Frontage Road Improvements on SR 20* – A meeting was held recently with Caltrans staff, and Greg Bickett and Doug Hobbs of Bickett Engineering, Inc. to discuss Caltrans contributions to the project. It is eligible for both Caltrans safety and operations funding. The final amount of Caltrans contribution is pending but should exceed \$1.5 million. The triangle of intersections at Auburn Street and Colfax Avenue are eligible for safety funds due to accidents at that location. Caltrans will provide “Minor A” operations funds to improve the weave near the Idaho-Maryland on-ramp/Bennett Street off-ramp, and will contribute a “pro rata” share of the cost of a signal at the Idaho-Maryland/Railroad Avenue intersection.

Commissioner Brady voiced his appreciation of Caltrans efforts to work with Bickett Engineering to acquire funds for the Grass Valley Corridor Improvement Project (GVCIP). Executive Director Landon stated NCTC staff would work with the City of Grass Valley to secure bond funds to construct the project. While Caltrans safety funds are currently available, the City will be reimbursed with “Minor A” funds as they become available.

- *Town of Truckee SR 89 Dual Roundabouts at I-80* – Caltrans has issued the encroachment permit to the Town to allow construction. Federal Highway Administration approval was received, the job will be awarded soon, and construction will start in the spring of 2005.
- *SR 49 Left Turn Lane at Newtown Road* – Construction has been completed.
- *SR 20 Safety Realignment and Widening* – A kickoff meeting was held for PS&E (Plans, Specifications, and Estimates) final design January 6, 2005. The schedule for R/W (right-of-way) certification and listing the job for construction is January 2006. Blasting will occur in the Pet Hill area, so a traffic-handling plan will be devised to keep traffic moving during construction.

- *Dorsey Drive Interchange* – On December 20th Caltrans Design staff presented to NCTC and Grass Valley staff the scope and cost information for the proposed signalized alternative at Dorsey Drive. The roundabout alternative appears to be more expensive when right-of-way cost estimates are considered, so the focus is back on the signalized alternative. The December 2004 project construction cost estimates are around \$17 million, however there is currently just over \$6 million programmed for construction. Assumptions behind the \$17 million estimate will be checked. Executive Director Landon questioned if the \$17 million figure included PS&E, R/W, and construction or if it was just the construction costs. Mr. Brannon responded the \$17 million is for construction only. Commissioner Weaver questioned how much of the \$17 million related only to the overpass expense. Tom Brannon responded that the roadway items are rounded to \$11 million and rebuilding the structure is approximately \$4 million.

There is an issue of how much the overpass structure will need to be raised to meet current vertical standards. It is not yet known if there will be any funds available in the 2006 STIP cycle to add to the \$6 million already programmed. The Design Team will also evaluate if the project could be constructed in a phased or staged manner, so it can be completed as funds are made available. Vice-Chairman Steele questioned if it would be possible to lower the highway rather than raise the overpass. Tom Brannon replied that is being evaluated now to determine how the additional earthwork to lower the road would compare to the cost to raise the structure. Mr. Brannon stated if you lower the road, rerouting traffic during construction would be very expensive.

Commissioner Brady voiced his concerns about the money being borrowed from the STIP funds and placed in the General Fund. He questioned how the NCTC would meet the \$11 million shortfall of funds. Mr. Brannon assured the Commission that the Caltrans Design Team would be looking at building a portion of the project with money available. Commissioner Brady asked what the schedule would look like and how the funds would be allocated for planned development and environmental research to progress to the construction phase. Tom Brannon responded the money has been allocated for the PA/ED (Project Approval and Environmental Documentation) and programmed for the PS&E phase. He also stated the ideal scenario is to have sufficient funds to acquire R/W now to avoid future cost increases. PS&E would include a phased design so the interchange could be built as money becomes available. Commissioner Brady asked Mr. Brannon to include the phasing aspect into the schedule. Executive Director Landon replied the key to knowing how to proceed would come when the 2006 STIP fund estimate comes out in late July or early August.

Commissioner Brady questioned if discussions on the roundabout alternative were cut off due to R/W acquisition costs versus the total construction costs. Tom Brannon responded there had been hopes of getting by with a narrower structure by using roundabouts at the ramp intersections. The signalized alternative requires a five-lane structure and the roundabout alternative uses a four-lane structure, therefore the savings were not significant. Executive Director Landon reported they would have had to realign Joerschke Drive to get the roundabout entrance at the correct angle for traffic operation, and that would cut through one of the buildings at the intersection. Commissioner Brady asked if Caltrans would lease back a building to the occupant when it was purchased in 2007 for R/W purposes, until the area was needed for construction. Tom Brannon responded that in the past Caltrans has leased back buildings to the previous owners until they were needed.

- *SR 49 Five Lane Widening Project From Combie Road to Grass Valley* – Caltrans met with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in early January to discuss the requirement to achieve environmental clearance over the twelve-mile corridor from the Wolf/Combie Road Intersection up to Grass Valley. Based on financial constraints, Caltrans proposed to FHWA to proceed with environmental clearance and construction on one segment of the corridor at a time, in this case the La Barr Meadows Road area. The FHWA was comfortable with proceeding by segments, as long as there are logical beginning and ending points for each project and each segment meets an identified transportation need. This will save considerable money in the PA/ED phase of the project. Currently there is \$3.5 million programmed to achieve environmental clearance over the entire corridor, so some of that money may be applied to other phases of the project. Mr. Brannon stated because the La Barr Meadows Road area is heavily developed, it is unlikely they will encounter any environmental issues there. He believes the current schedule will be met and possibly will be improved upon with these changes.
- *SR 49 From Lime Kiln to Pekolee Dr. Shoulder Widening* – Moving into the final steps before advertising the job, Caltrans has contracted to remove trees along the proposed construction area prior to March 1st in order to avoid nesting bird restrictions.

4B. Caltrans District 3 - Project Status Report: Ann Marie Robinson, Caltrans Regional Liaison for Nevada County.

- *City of Grass Valley Park and Ride at Colfax Avenue/South Auburn* – Ann Marie Robinson contacted Caltrans District 3 Maintenance to clean up debris in the lot, after an article appeared in The Union newspaper regarding its condition. Ms. Robinson discussed the condition of the lot and mentioned some signage options that may better identify the lot as a “Park and Ride” facility. Executive Director Landon noted that feedback from the City of Grass Valley should be solicited on proposed signage. Commissioner Ingram requested the language used on the signs be reviewed by NCTC, the Grass Valley Downtown Association, and the Grass Valley Traffic Safety Committee.
- *Safety Awareness and Driver Behavior* – Ann Marie Robinson reported that Wayne Raley, a California Highway Patrol (CHP) volunteer who participated in the previous public workshop at Forest Springs Mobile Home Park, will be returning to teach an AARP Safe Driving Class. Ms. Robinson also mentioned she works with a Safety Group, which includes retired CHP officers, who have developed their own teaching tape to present to community groups. She would like to broaden awareness of driver behavior in western Nevada County, especially focusing on seniors over 60 years of age, and the escalated accident and death rate for the senior age group.

Harriet McKay, a citizen in the audience, made a suggestion for Ms. Robinson to contact Bette Worth at the Senior Center in Grass Valley. Ms. McKay also suggested that Sierra Services for the Blind be contacted, since there are individuals she is acquainted with who have macular degeneration and are still driving in the County.

Commissioner Weaver commended Ms. Robinson for taking on this project on behalf of Nevada County citizens.

CONSENT ITEMS:

5. NCTC Minutes: December 15, 2004. *Approved.*

6. 2003/04 FY Fiscal and Compliance Audits: Copies of the audits were included in the Commissioner's packets only. *Accepted the 2003/04 FY fiscal and compliance audits.*

Commissioner Weaver made a motion to approve the consent items. Commissioner Brady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

7. Election of Officers: The Commission will select a chairman and vice-chairman for 2005. This action is per the NCTC's Policies and Procedures Manual Section 103.0, Election of Officers and Duties, Item D: Elections: "The offices of chair and vice-chair shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present in January or as soon thereafter as possible ..." The Commission may want to defer this action to the next meeting when the Board of Supervisors representatives are in attendance.

Vice-Chairman Steele asked the Commissioners their opinion on how to proceed, since the two County Supervisors and the Truckee representative were not in attendance at this meeting. The Commissioners in attendance agreed to defer the election of officers to the March 16, 2005 NCTC meeting, when all members would potentially be in attendance.

8. Allocation Request from Nevada County: Through the adoption of Resolution 04-577, the County of Nevada is requesting an allocation of \$106,021.86 of Local Transportation Funds for transit/paratransit operations for FY 2004/05.

Commissioner Brady made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-01. Commissioner Ingram seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Amendment I to the 2004/05 Overall Work Program: Amend as stated in staff report.

Commissioner Brady made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-02 and Resolution 05-03. Commissioner Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Closed Session: Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957, Employee Performance Evaluation of the Executive Director, Daniel B. Landon.

Commissioner Brady questioned if the closed session should be postponed to allow for a County representative to be present. Vice-Chairman Steele responded the past Commissioners were asked to give input, while the new members would not have had an opportunity to interact with Executive Director Landon and would therefore not have much to add to the review process. Commissioner Weaver added there was no guarantee there would be a full Commission at the March meeting. Consensus was reached and Vice-Chairman Steele adjourned the NCTC meeting at 9:11 a.m. and conducted a closed session with the Commissioners and Mr. Landon.

Vice-Chairman Steele reconvened the NCTC meeting at 9:27 a.m. and reported the Commission has directed staff to bring back a proposal for a cost-of-living increase and a performance bonus. This item will be included on the March 16, 2005 agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No comments were made.

COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS:

No comments were made.

SCHEDULE FOR NEXT MEETING:

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, 2005 at 8:30 a.m., at the City of Nevada City Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Vice-Chairman Steele adjourned the meeting at 9:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: _____
Antoinette Perry, Administrative Assistant

Approved on: _____

By: _____
Chairman
Nevada County Transportation Commission